

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00
ICAE-00 INRE-00 COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01
DOTE-00 HA-05 MCT-01 FAA-00 OC-06 CCO-00 PC-01
OPR-02 AID-05 TRSE-00 A-01 /086 W
-----106476 242315Z /23

O R 242214Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY LIMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 177
INFO AMEMBASSY PANAMA
AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
AMEMBASSY QUITO
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 4537

PANAMA FOR RSS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EFIN PINT PE
SUBJ: COUNTRYWIDE GENERAL STRIKE: THE AFTERMATH

REF: LIMA 4497, PREEG-KEMP TELCON 5/24/78

1. SUMMARY: TRANSPORT, TRAFFIC AND BUSINESS IN LIMA RETURNED TO
NORMAL BY MIDDAY MAY 24, FOLLOWING 2-DAY NATIONAL STRIKE. A
10 PM TO 5 AM CURFEW CONTINUES IN EFFECT. THE OFFICIALLY
ACKNOWLEDGED DEATH TOLL FOR THE 10-DAY-LONG DISTURBANCES
THROUGHOUT PERU IS 21. CREDIBLE EXTRA-OFFICIAL ESTIMATES
PLACE THE TOTAL NUMBER OF DETAINEES IN LIMA AT ABOUT 800.
THE MILITARY AND POLICE CONTINUE TO ENFORCE ORDER IN MOST
PROVINCIAL CITIES, BUT NO NEW INCIDENTS WERE REPORTED EXCEPT
IN HUANCABELICA, WHERE SERIOUS DISORDERS ERUPTED ON MONDAY AND
TUESDAY AND 4 PEOPLE WERE KILLED. LEFTIST LABOR CONFEDERATION
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CGTP IS THREATENING TO RENEW STRIKE INDEFINITELY IF DETAINED
UNION LEADERS ARE NOT RELEASED. END SUMMARY.

2. PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN LIMA THE MORNING OF MAY 24 APPEARS ALMOST
ENTIRELY NORMAL, WITH LARGE NUMBERS OF PRIVATELY-OWNED MICROBUSES
COMPLEMENTING MUNICIPAL BUSES IN BRINGING WORKERS FROM PERIPHERAL
AREAS. GOP AUTHORIZATION FOR PRIVATE CARS TO OPERATE AS TAXIS

CONTINUES IN EFFECT AND ARMY TRUCKS HAVE BEEN PRESSED INTO SERVICE TO HELP TRANSPORT WORKERS FROM SOME AREAS. SHOPS AND BUSINESSES WERE SOMEWHAT SLOW IN OPENING THIS MORNING, BUT CONFIDENCE IS DEFINITELY RETURNING AND COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY WAS VIRTUALLY NORMAL IN MOST OF LIMA BY MIDDAY. PUBLIC MARKETS ARE OPEN BUT STOCKS AND ACTIVITY APPEAR REDUCED. A PRELIMINARY CHECK WITH LOCAL INDUSTRY INDICATES ALMOST NORMAL ACTIVITY IN MOST PLANTS. SOME WORKERS WERE LATE IN ARRIVING BUT BY MIDMORNING ATTENDANCE WAS ABOUT 95 PERCENT OR NORMAL. A 10 TO 5 AM CURFEW OF INDEFINITE DURATION REMAINS IN EFFECT IN THE LIMA METROPOLITAN AREA.

3. MORNING PRESS MAY 24 INDICATES THAT 2 PERSONS WERE KILLED IN YESTERDAY'S INCIDENTS IN LIMA, ONE IN A CLASH WITH TROOPS AND ONE IN VIOLATION OF THE CURFEW. OFFICIAL COUNT LISTS 4 WOUNDED. THE LIMA RUMOR MILL IS BEGINNING TO CRANK OUT MUCH HIGHER CASUALTY RATES IN THE 10-DAY-LONG DISTURBANCES THROUGHOUT PERU. ONE DAO SOURCE ALLEGES THAT AS MANY AS 30 DIED DURING MONDAY'S AND TUESDAY'S DISTURBANCES IN LIMA, BUT WE FEEL THAT THIS FIGURE IS EXAGGERATED. OFFICIAL COUNT FOR BOTH DAYS IN LIMA IS 5. ADDED TO LAST WEEK'S OFFICIAL FIGURE OF 12 DEATHS IN PROVINCIAL CITIES, PLUS 4 ACKNOWLEDGED KILLED IN HUANCABELICA ON MONDAY (SEE BELOW), THE OFFICIAL DEATH TOLL THUS FAR IS 21.

4. RELIABLE ESTIMATES ON THE TOTAL NUMBER OF DETAINEES IN LIMA AND OTHER CITIES ARE ELUSIVE. WE REPORTED EARLIER THAT SOME 20 LABOR LEADERS AND LEFTISTS WERE ARRESTED IN LIMA PRIOR TO THE CONFIDENTIAL

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STRIKE AS A PREVENTATIVE MEASURE. THESE PEOPLE ARE APPARENTLY STILL BEING HELD. WE HAVE NO OFFICIAL REPORT ON THE NUMBERS ARRESTED DURING MONDAY'S AND TUESDAY'S DISTURBANCES, BUT A VERY RELIABLE UNOFFICIAL SOURCE PUTS THE TOTAL NUMBER OF DETAINEES IN LIMA AT ABOUT 800. AN EMBASSY EMPLOYEE OBSERVED A CROWD OF ABOUT 500 PEOPLE, PROBABLY RELATIVES OF DETAINEES, AT THE GATES OF PIP HEADQUARTERS NEAR THE CHANCERY. THE NUMBER OF DETAINEES IN PROVINCIAL CITIES IS STILL UNKNOWN, BUT IT IS LIKELY THAT SOME WILL BE SENT TO LIMA. WE HAVE HEARD FROM RELIABLE SOURCES THAT SOME LABOR LEADERS AND LEFTIST POLITICIANS ROUNDED UP PRIOR TO THE GENERAL STRIKE HAVE BEEN SENT TO THE JUNGLE PENAL COLONY AT EL SEPA. JOURNALIST HUMBERTO DAMONTE, PRESIDENT OF THE EDITORIAL BOARD OF "MARKA", HAS ALSO APPARENTLY BEEN SENT TO EL SEPA, WHILE RIGHTIST "EL TIEMPO" EDITOR ALFONSO BAELEA TUESTA IS STILL DETAINED WITHOUT CHARGE IN STATE SECURITY IN LIMA.

5. INFORMATION ON THE SITUATION IN PROVINCIAL CITIES IS STILL SPOTTY, BUT REPORTS INDICATE A GENERAL IMPROVEMENT IN THE SITUATION IN MOST PLACES SINCE YESTERDAY. TOURIST AND COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES IN CUZCO CONTINUE ALMOST NORMAL. IN AREQUIPA THERE HAVE BEEN NO INCIDENTS IN 4 DAYS, BUT PUBLIC TRANSPORT IS STILL

COMPLETELY PARALYZED. UNION LEADERS REPORTEDLY MET YESTERDAY TO DISCUSS STRATEGY, BUT DID NOT TALK AGAIN WITH REGIONAL MILITARY COMMANDER SCHROTH CARLIN. SCHROTH HAS SAID THAT HIS DOOR IS OPEN BUT THAT HE WON'T NEGOTIATE SERIOUSLY UNTIL THE STRIKE IS LIFTED. THE TWO SIDES ARE EXPECTED TO MEET AGAIN TODAY. LABOR UNIONS ARE DEMANDING THE RELEASE OF 6 LEADERS AS A PRIOR CONDITION TO ENDING THE STRIKE. MARKETS AND STORES ARE OPEN, BUT FUNCTION ON A RESTRICTED BASIS. SOME RETAILERS WHO REFUSED TO OPEN HAVE HAD THEIR MERCHANDISE CONFISCATED BY AUTHORITIES. MOVIE THEATERS WILL OPEN THIS AFTERNOON AND PAVING BLOCKS IN THE CENTER CITY ARE BEING REPLACED. A 10 PM TO 5 AM CURFEW CONTINUES IN EFFECT IN ICA AND NEARBY PISCO; AND IN HUANCABELICA, WHERE 4 WERE KILLED IN VIOLENT CLASHES ON MONDAY, A 9 PM TO 6 AM CURFEW HAS BEEN IMPOSED. ACCORDING TO PRESS MAY 24, 14 RAIL CARS WERE BURNED
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BY ANGRY CROWDS IN HUANCABELICA ON MONDAY, THE OFFICES OF THE STATE RAIL SYSTEM WERE SACKED, THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE STATE SOCIAL MOBILIZATION AGENCY SINAMOS WAS DYNAMITED AND 14 PEOPLE HAVE BEEN HOSPITALIZED. YESTERDAY ANOTHER MOB TRIED TO TEAR DOWN THE MICROWAVE TRANSMITTER/RECEIVER IN HUANCABELICA AND THE SITUATION THERE REMAINS TENSE, WITH LARGE NUMBERS OF DETAINEES AND ARMY REINFORCEMENTS FROM HUANCAYO PATROLLING THE STREETS. SOUTHERN PERU COPPER CORPORATION (SPCC) MINES AND SMELTER (TPQUEPALA, CUAJONE AND ILO) OPERATED NORMALLY MAY 22, 23 AND 24 BUT THERE IS A POSSIBILITY OF RENEWED STRIKE AT TOQUEPALA AND ILO OVER STILL UNRESOLVED PROBLEM OF FIRED WORKERS.

6. LABOR UNION ATTITUDES ARE APPARENTLY DIVIDED OVER THE POSSIBLE CONTINUATION OR RENEWAL OF THE STRIKE. WITHIN THE CGTP, MOSCOW-LINE PCP ELEMENTS FAVOR AN END TO THE STRIKE, WHILE MORE EXTREME ELEMENTS WANT TO KEEP THE COUNTRY IN TURMOIL AND ABORT UPCOMING ELECTIONS. BANK UNION LEADERS CONTINUE TO THREATEN AN INDEFINITE STRIKE IF THEIR LEADER IS NOT RELEASED. LIMA TRANSPORT AND HOTEL WORKERS HAVE BEEN TOLD BY CGTP HEADQUARTERS THAT ANOTHER GENERAL STRIKE OF INDEFINITE DURATION MAY BE CALLED IF ALL DETAINED UNION LEADERS ARE NOT RELEASED.

7. AIRPORT OPERATIONS AT LIMA'S JORGE CHAVEZ INTERNATIONAL AND MAJOR AIRPORTS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY WERE ALMOST NORMAL MAY 24, ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS AND AERONAUTICAL SOURCES. ACCESS TO AIRPORTS IS NORMAL IN THE CAPITAL AND CUZCO, BUT STILL DIFFICULT IN AREQUIPA. (TAXIS AVAILABLE OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS, ABOUT HALF MILE FROM CENTER OF TOWN.) WE EXPECT THE AIRPORT AT PUCALLPA TO BE OPERATING NORMALLY ON MAY 26 (REFTELCON) BUT WILL INFORM IF SITUATION IS OTHERWISE.
SHLAUDEMAM

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